

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Preparation

The key to successful interviewing is effective preparation. It is critical for you to be prepared to talk about yourself and your interest in the job to convince a hiring committee of your ability to do the job.

The two major areas you need to prepare for are:

YOURSELF	PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills• Interests• Experience• Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of the institution• Structure of the department• Knowledge of products, services or research areas• Understanding of the position

In order to prepare for questions about yourself, use the following model:

1. After studying the job description, list relevant skills you have that relate to the position.

SKILLS

- Research
- Writing
- Communication
- etc.

2. Next, come up with an example of how and when you used each skill.

EXAMPLES

- "I have developed strong research skills through my work at the Lineberger Cancer Center exploring. . "
- "This year, I submitted 2 articles that were accepted for publication, demonstrating my effective writing skills . . . "

3. Finally, apply your skill to the job at hand.

APPLICATION

- "I understand that extensive research experience will be important in this job because I'll be exploring the effects of 5-HT₃ receptor antagonists on nausea caused by cancer therapy. . . "
- "I am anxious to contribute my writing skills to your goal of producing top-quality publications . . . "

To prepare for questions about the employer, visit:

- Employer's homepage
- Informational websites about different industries (www.chronicle.com, www.wetfeet.com, www.vault.com, etc.)
- Libraries
- Bookstores
- Current employees
- Professionals in the field

Sample Questions

Questions asked by employers:

1. Tell me about yourself
2. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
3. What interests you most about this position?
4. What can you offer us?
5. What are your greatest strengths?
6. Can you name some weaknesses?
7. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
8. What do you know about our organization (products, services, research, departments, etc.)?
9. What skills have you developed that relate to this job?
10. What did you enjoy most about your last employment experience? Least?
11. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution for your employer.
12. Have you ever had difficulty working with a professor/advisor/supervisor/co-worker in the past? How did you handle it?
13. How do you think your advisor/supervisor would describe you?
14. Describe a time when you worked as a member of a team.

Possible questions asked during academic interviews:

1. Describe your current research.
2. Why did you choose to focus on this area?
3. What will your next research project be? Are you planning to make any future changes to your current project?
4. Where do you plan to be in 5 years in terms of your scholarship?
5. Describe your philosophy of teaching.
6. How do you motivate students?
7. Describe a course you have taught in the past and how you evaluated the students' learning.
8. How would you teach this (introductory level, intermediate, advanced level) course? What primary and secondary texts would you choose?
9. How have you used technology in the classroom?
10. How would you increase enrollment in this major?
11. Describe your ideal course. What does the syllabus look like? What texts would you envision using?
12. Why are you interested in this college/university?

Questions you might ask employers:

1. Can you describe the primary responsibilities of this position?
2. What does a typical day look like?
3. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) right now?
4. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
5. What is the usual promotional time frame?
6. What do you like best about your job/this organization?

7. Has there been much turnover in this area?
8. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
9. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
10. Is there a lot of team/project work?
11. What is life like in this city/town?
12. What are the next steps? When should I expect to hear from you?

Do's and Don'ts

INTERVIEW DO'S	INTERVIEW DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the department before the interview • Review sample questions and practice your answers • Schedule a mock interview with OPS • Bring extra CVs/resumes to the interview • Dress professionally • Bring a list of questions you have for the interviewers • Send follow-up thank-you letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept a formal interview to "practice" your interviewing skills • Ask about salary during the initial interview • Ask about a position for your partner • Argue with the interviewer • Volunteer negative information • Continue to interview after you accepted a position